A Resume on

COLONIALISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF RAJA RAO AND CHINUA ACHEBE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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A] Introduction

Literature has a wonderful purpose to educate, entertain and to portray the dignity of human conscience by way of reflecting social realities to the best possible extent in the times. Literature, being a mirror to society, the best replicates social scenario, values, culture, nature, outlook and conscience. An author, to be greatly good, imagines intensely and comprehensively. He puts himself in the place of other and many others to revisit the pains and pleasure through his imagination. Hence, literature makes us explore the experiences, events, people with their joys, and sufferings. In fact, it mirrors the society and its mannerisms and propagates philosophy of life in the times. Hence, a researcher should aim to see into the depth of this mirror to understand the textual realities reflected from social realities.

Colonialism has been considered as a practice of domination that revolves the systematic subjugation of one people to another. Although, it seems to be easy, it is difficult to define the term since it has many complexities. It involves the political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues to their difference. The term 'colony' comes from the Latin word ‘colonus’ meaning farmer that denotes the practice of colonialism and transfer of population to a new territory where they live as permanent settlers. 'Imperialism', on the contrary, origins from the Latin term 'imperium' denotes the mechanism of control over others.

The true meaning of colonialism has been a long-lasting concern for socio-political philosophers in the Western and Eastern cultures. Since the Crusades and the conquest of the Americans, political theorists have found it difficult to recognize ideas about justice and natural laws of life while practicing the European sovereignty over non-Western people. The nineteenth century witnessed acute tension between liberal thoughts and colonial practice of Europe over the rest of the world. Ironically, the same period reflects the most influential philosophers propagating the principles of universalism, equality and autonomy. The period signifies political, economic and cultural dependence of 'uncivilized' societies and meek surrender to the 'assumedly civilized' one.

Colonialism, as a socio-political literary theory, emerged during the period of colonial domination worldwide. It has been identified, analyzed, interpreted, explored and critiqued throughout the world for its influence on the contemporary generations. Some of the exploratory findings on the interrelation of colonialism and imperialism show the dimensions of British colonial; their political domination in more direct and extremely violent manners. The phases of colonization and decolonization have left memories, influences and sufferings over the sub-conscious mind of generations through its process during the age. The correlations between political dominance, economic distortion, cultural transformation, and religious encroachment have witnessed distinctive problems of individuals. Many Indian as well as writers from colonized countries have explored their respective choices and voices made during the periods of political envisions. Colonization of geography, politics and culture was less evident than the colonizing the mind of generations during this phase. A more political domination came along with a higher level of economic transformation. It has triggered many questions of identity, heredity, history and hegemony of cultures, customs and traditions.

The philosophical disposition of colonialism reflects how European thinkers have justified, legitimized and challenged political and economic domination in the times. Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon. The world has witnessed many examples when one society gradually expanded its margins to adjacent territories and settled its people to newly conquered territory. The ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Moors, and the Ottomans and so on are the most famous examples. The period of technological inventions have decisively changed the course of colonialism and connected to more remote places in the world. The developments in transportation facility has demarked all geographical margins and widened the scope of colonies. The same has brought European settlement and political control over the rest of the world; including America, Australia and parts of Africa and Asia.

It is pleasing to recall that many Indian writers along with writers from the USA, the UK and Canada have denoted a deep rooted sense of colonialism through their literary flairs. Indian novelists such as Rabindranath Tagore, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Balachandra Rajan and Bharati Mukherjee have

postulated the colonial and the post-colonial influences through their writings. They have projected several themes from colonialism as a deep rooted sense of nationalism, identity crisis, socio-political, cultural and religious dominance, economic suppression and imposition of religion in the country. They have noted carefully the emergence of modernization and a growing attraction towards Westernization of life in general sense.

There is difficulty in defining colonialism since it denotes both colonialism and imperialism that forms the conquest to benefit Europe economically and strategically. The distinction between the two, however, is not entirely consistent in literature. Philosophically, some scholars distinguish between 'colonies for settlement' and colonies for 'economic exploitation'. Imperialism was commonly understood as a system of military domination and sovereignty over territories. On the contrary, colonialism as a broad concept refers to the project of European political domination from the sixteenth to twentieth century that ended with National Liberation Movement in 1960s. Besides, the term 'post-colonialism' refers to the political and theoretical struggle of societies that experienced transition from political dependence to sovereignty. Osterhammel in his book *"How can 'Colonialism' be defined independently from 'colony?'* asserts the definition of colonialism as

> Colonialism is a relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule. (https://brainly.in)

Colonialism named as imperialism figures out victories of rulers to exploit victims of owned land during the period of colonialism. The colonial frame of reference during 1910s to 1970s enables numerous writers including Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Kiran Desai, Khushwant Singh, Mulk Raj Anand, Chinua Achebe and so on to deal with the themes of rise and decay of British Empire. Almost all Indian novelists have dealt with illusion and disillusioned state of generations: their predicament, inability to collaborate within Western values, their inclination to Indian customs and traditions

and peculiar vision of the world. The colonial paradigm, thus, enabled them to create, construct and exploit characters from real sense of colonialism having true sense of colonized sub-consciousness. They are at times losers, victims, marginalized, and exploited due to political, economic and cultural dominance. Hence, colonial echoes also present them as survivors, strugglers and destitute suffering with respective predicaments.

Almost all of them seek escape from the disillusioned state of colonialism where they want to celebrate their decolonization but their inability to collaborate and withstand with modern outlook and aspirations take them back to the roots and resultantly bring them nothing but withdrawal from the society. They make and break their promises during the course and emerge with newer impressions of realities that are greater than the realities itself. Magnificently, Raja Rao, Chinua Achebe, Kamala Markandaya and Mulk Raj Anand have contributed to the making of socio-political conscience during the period having more inclination towards positive side of colonialism. Simultaneously, they have portrayed the darker side of colonialism affecting psyche and conscience of the generations living under colonial conditions. Rather they portray them as circumstantial victims at the hands of destiny having positive aspirations but no choice but to follow all kinds of subjugations in their world.

Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe do portray colonial masters, more brutish and cynical deeply rooted rulers to contradict with the basic human philosophy offering common good of humanity. Rather, they succeed in portraying two opposite worlds of '*colonizers'* and '*colonized'* within their linguistic entities. The conflicting ideologies, lifestyle and cultural values of East-West offer each of their readers with fragmented illusions of the contemporary generations. Eventually, they succeed to maintain integrity of characters with their moral, spiritual and cultural beliefs, value system and orientation.

The present research aims to contribute to the thoughtful proposition of colonialism by exploring philosophy of colonialism in the selected novels of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe. The research in the area would establish and validate the influences of colonialism, sufferings and distinctive facets of colonialism as well. It also aims at exploring the theoretical disposition of colonialism in its preliminary explorations for

in-depth understanding of the theory. Simultaneously, it aims at mediating the true definition, its analysis in the due course of the study. However, the study would undertake outstanding literary creations of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe to explore the courses of colonialism in the contemporary era. The same would postulate a fine borderline of colonial perspectives in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India* (1965) and *Comrade Kirillov* (1976). Comparatively, it would undertake celebrated novels of Chinua Achebe; *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964). The research would seek to explore all perspectives, themes and ideas of colonialism in the selected novels. Simultaneously, it would also revolve around socio-political dominance, economic and cultural dominance of one colony on the others.

B] Research Problem

1. Whether colonialism and its various aspects are projected in the selected novels of the respective novelists?
2. Whether economic, socio-cultural and religious aspects are dealt by the respective writers and if yes then at what point do they come close and what point do they differ?
3. What would be the theoretical and practical scenario of colonial conditions of life, deeply rooted in the psyche of contemporary generations and how were the conditions aftermaths?

C] Objectives of Research

1. The present study would delineate upon the numerous facets and dimensions of 'colonialism' in the designated novels of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe.
2. It would mediate the entire relative phenomenon, doctrines associated with the voices of colonialism in the sub-consciousness of the times such as: socio-political dominance, economic suppression, cultural hegemony, sense of dislocation, identity crisis, religious supremacy, voices of modernity and so on. Comparatively, it would locate and negotiate similarities and dissimilarities of perspectives between the two author-novelists so as to reach fine borderline of colonialism in the period.

3. Nevertheless, it would also provide a constructive conclusion to the research topic undertaken.
4. Similarly, the study would highlight numerous influences, clues and authority of colonialism over the consciousness of contemporary people that get reflected through literary works.

D] Hypothesis

1. The present research attempts to develop a systematic critique of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe's selected massive and important novels revolving around the world of colonial India and Nigeria respectively.
2. It would rejoice all distinctive perspectives of colonialism, a theory of socio-political and cultural dominance that proclaim some of the important issues under colonial conditions.
3. A comparative insight into the realms of colonial perspectives such as socio-political and cultural dominance, economic suppression, and sense of dislocation, identity crisis, social inequalities, religious dominance, and obsession to ethnicity, nationalism, and emergence of modernism would provide a comprehensive picture of colonial world.
4. A comparative interpretation of Chinua Achebe's colonial world from Nigerian context and Raja Rao's colonial world from Indian context would delineate a perfect, comprehensive understanding of colonialism on the larger canvas of English literature.
5. It would simplify theoretical as well as practical scenario of colonial conditions of life, deeply rooted in the psyche of contemporary generations and help us to understand its aftermaths as well.

E] Data, Scope and Limitations

The present research essentially rest upon the availability of primary and secondary sources. It would embrace all the pervasive phenomena of colonialism and relevant perspectives to the same. However, it would be a limited study of selected novels of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe. If it necessitates, the research can be extended by including more texts by similar authors. The research would be flexible enough to include more colonial perspectives as per the necessity and findings of the research. Logically, it would be a relevant study of selected perspectives in designated authors.

F] Research Methodology

The present research would employ an extensive reading of primary and secondary data as per the availability of the study material so as to formulate a concrete conclusion to the subject undertaken; the research would exploit library methodology for collection of data and information. In order to achieve constructive conclusion to the chosen topic, the researcher would remain objective in its analysis. It would utilize analytical readings of the selected texts and while formulating the theoretical context to the findings of colonialism it would utilize descriptive methodology.

G] Justification of Research

The present research would bring larger benefits and interest to the students, knowledge seekers, researchers and aspirants in the field of English literature. The same would explore on different perspectives of colonialism employed by designated novelists. It would bring forth numerous voices and echoes of colonialism under different conditions. It would clearly identify, interpret and constructively analyze findings of colonialism in designated novelists. The study, indeed, would explore larger canvas of colonialism for the students of literature to build their comprehensive and in-depth understanding of colonialism. Simultaneously, it would also connect the dots to fill out the gap of understanding with supportive facts and findings of this research.

H] Pedagogical Implications

The research in the area of colonialism undertaken in relevance with designated novelists would provide an ample ground for formative discussion of colonialism in the study. It would revolve around the colonial theory, philosophical disposition and relative facets of the same. Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe have, magnificently, delineated voices and choices made by colonial protagonists and characters. The study would underline numerous layers of interpretation of colonialism under different circumstances in the novels. Thus, it would be helpful to the students, researchers, critics and aspirants of English literatures. Those who are seeking their interest to understand colonialism to its fullest possible extent would get benefited largely through the formative study in the area.

I] Tentative Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter would introduce a strong theoretical foreground for the research topic by explaining preliminary explorations of the theory, colonialism. Further, logically, it would establish and validate strong linking of philosophical association of Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe to colonial thinking and sub-consciousness. The chapter would provide an appropriate introduction to the colonialism theory, selected novelists Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe and logical concern amongst them by making significant denotations about reflections of colonial period and conscience in their writings. Besides, A literature review would be discussed on various research papers published in National and International journals referred journals and books which are related to present research work**.** The researcher will think and find out the research review regarding the related colonialism in the actual writing of final thesis.

Chapter 2: Delineating Colonialism

The second chapter attempts to define, explore as well as evaluate the theory of colonialism to its fullest possible extent. The same would explore all the relative aspects, perspectives and complexities of colonialism and its practice by Indian English novelists through their writings. Similarly, the chapter would postulate the reflection of colonial conditions of life, its greater influence on the characters and the sub-consciousness. Theoretically, the chapter would undertake a careful and comprehensive study of the theory from its emergence to the ruin. Simultaneously, it would comprise contributions by distinguished Indian novelists to the theory of colonialism. Moreover, the chapter would explore distinguished facets of colonialism, its historical development, geographical conditions, colonizing countries, colonial philosophy, its impact on economy, politics, society and as well as the sub-consciousness of the times. It would cover all relative aspects such as socio-political dominance, cultural supremacy, religious exploitation, economical slavery and distinguished endeavors of the contemporary novelist to reflect the same through their novels and characters.

Chapter 3: Colonialism in the Selected Novels of Raja Rao

The third chapter would carry out a careful study of Raja Rao's selected novels *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Cat and Shakespeare: A Tale of India* (1965) and *Comrade Kirillov* (1976) to explore the facets of colonialism, and colonial conditions of life in the contemporary India.

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* mainly deals with crucial historical events of nineteen-thirties. It fabricates the story of Moorthappa Moorthy, the protagonist, having biographical reflections of Mahatma Gandhi. It best rejoices the East-West conflict, the Civil Disobedience Movement in India, its consequence, women's role, traditions and customs in India, Myths of Gandhian philosophy against the colonial British Raj. It revolves around Moorthy's fight against orthodoxy at social levels and the British Raj at political levels. However, it is considered as the best literary work written to explore dominance of Western culture, politics and philosophy as well.

Raja Rao's *The Cat and Shakespeare*, the metaphysical comedy, postulates Ramkrishna Pai's journey towards supreme knowledge. During the course he gets transformed from *a 'Sadhaka'* to '*Bhakta'* who surrenders to the God, as a kitten to the Mother Cat. Ultimately, Ramakrishna Pai attains salvation, and elevation of spirit against the traditional scenario in India.

Raja Rao's *Comrade Kirillov* sketches a South Indian Man named Padmanabha Iyer, who flies to England in 1928 and settles down there. However, he is influenced by Marxism. He offers much respect and concern to Mahatma Gandhi and his endeavours for freedom in India. It covers Indian struggle for Independence. Significantly, it denotes conflict between tradition and modernity. Ultimately, Padmanabha Iyer returns to India and converts into a religious fanatic.

The present chapter would present Raja Rao's comprehensive perception of colonial India as well as his understanding of socio-political resistance to the British Raj against the backdrop of cultural hegemony depicted almost in three novels. Raja Rao has been a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi, his ideals and philosophy of ahimsa and non-violence. His obsession to colonial rule, mass poverty in India, socio-cultural hegemony, strong cultural values, and the oppression of lower caste Hindus gets reflected throughout his writings. In fact, each of his novels can be regarded as the

chronicle of colonialism in India. Hence, the present chapter would attempt to explore his colonial perspectives in the selected novels.

Chapter 4: Colonialism in Selected Novels of Chinua Achebe.

The next chapter would undertake a descriptive study of Chinua Achebe's selected novels *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964) to find out and negotiate colonial perspectives in them.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* deals with how the prospect and the reality of change affect various characters. Okonkwo's resistance to the new political and the religious orders, and his fear to lose his cultural hegemony present his conflict between the tradition and the modernity. His obsession to self-worth, resistance to Christianity, and cultural values fabricates a well-balanced narrative standing upon the colonial ideology of the contemporary age. The novel fabricates several themes such as memory, social disintegration, greatness and ambition, fate and free will, fear, tribal belief, masculinity, and justice and creates a perfect synergy.

Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* focuses on socio-political criticism, a state of corruption in Nigeria. Obi Okonkwo, the protagonist, confronts several issues of bribery, arrives at customs and refuses to accept bribes. His fight to bring down corruption in government explores on economic and political dominance in the country. Several themes like dislocation, up-rootedness, identity crisis, women's sexual harassment, objectification, worst status of civil services and cultural conflict surrounds the main concern in the novel.

Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* is a political and cultural novel settled in Africa; Nigeria. It revolves around fictional story that reveals real story of colonial conditions of Nigeria and its fight against beliefs, culture during British invasions. It revokes Nigeria's cultural disintegration, reorientation from Western perspectives, clash of Christian values in the central character Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu. His fight against religious authority in the Church significantly denotes his proclamation against Westernization of life.

Chinua Achebe, significantly, postulates his chief concern to colonial conditioning of mind under the colonial dominance of Western countries in Nigeria. Chiefly, he deals with conflicting ideology of modernization and traditional values of Christianity that

overwhelms each of his readers. The present chapter would significantly explore upon his colonial perspectives fabricated in the selected novels.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The ultimate segment of the research, conclusions, would undertake a serious comparative analysis of colonialism reflected in the selected novels of both the novelist; Raja Rao and Chinua Achebe. It would trace out a significant borderline of colonialism; similarities and dissimilarities of issues that rose during the developmental course of the research by both the novelists and would collectively come to concrete conclusion of colonialism. Both the writers raise similar issues of concern relating to colonial conditions, socio-political dominance, economic suppression but assumedly there is distinction in their treatment to the subjects undertaken. Hence, the conclusions would formulate an apt and comprehensive understanding of colonialism reflected in both the writers.

Conclusively, the chapter would concentrate on the larger realities portrayed around different characters such as Moorthappa, Ramakrishna Pai and Padmanabha Iyer by Raja Rao and Okonkwo, Obi Okonkwo and Ezeulu by Chinua Achebe. An interpretative analysis and in-depth criticism would perfectly delineate larger canvas of colonialism embedded within sub-consciousness of the contemporary generations. Since Raja Rao is rooted chiefly in India's colonial context and Chinua Achebe signets the colonial heredity through Nigerian context, the comparative conclusion would help us formulate a comprehensive understanding of colonialism on the larger canvas of literature.

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